WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An isolated nucleic acid having the sequence defined by SEQUENCE ID NO: 1 or 3, or a fragment thereof capable of specifically hybridizing with a nucleic acid having the sequence defined by SEQUENCE ID NO: 1 or 3 under stringency conditions defined by a hybridization buffer comprising 30% formamide in 5 x SSPE (0.18 M NaCl, 0.01 M $NaPO_4$, pH7.7, 0.001 M EDTA) buffer at a temperature of 42°C and remaining bound when subject to washing at 42°C with the 0.2 x SSPE.

2. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 1 capable of specifically hybridizing with a nucleic acid having the sequence defined by SEQUENCE ID NO: 1 or 3 under stringency conditions defined by a hybridization buffer comprising 50% formamide in 5 x SSPE buffer at a temperature of 42°C and remaining bound when subject to washing at 42°C with 0.2 x SSPE buffer at 42°C.

3. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 1 encoding a human cellular inhibitor of apoptosis protein (c-IAP) comprising at least two of: a first domain comprising SEQUENCE ID NO: 5 or 6, a second domain comprising SEQUENCE ID NO: 7 or 8, and a third domain comprising SEQUENCE ID NO: 9 or 10; said protein having a c-IAP specific activity.

4. A method of making a human cellular inhibitor of apoptosis protein (c-IAP) comprising introducing a nucleic acid according to claim 3 into a host cell, growing said host cell under conditions whereby said nucleic acid is expressed as a transcript and said transcript is expressed as a translation product comprising a cellular inhibitor of apoptosis protein, and isolating said translation product.

5. A method of identifying lead compounds for a pharmacological agent useful in the diagnosis or treatment of disease, said method comprising the steps of:

incubating a mixture comprising:

a human c-IAP made by a method according to claim 4,

a natural intracellular human c-IAP binding target, wherein said binding target is capable of specifically binding said human c-IAP, and

a candidate pharmacological agent;

under conditions whereby, but for the presence of said candidate pharmacological agent, said human c-IAP specifically binds said binding target at a reference affinity;

detecting the binding affinity of said human c-IAP to said binding target to determine an agent-biased affinity,

wherein a difference between the agent-biased affinity and the test affinity indicates that said candidate pharmacological agent is a lead compound for a pharmacological agent capable of modulating human c-IAP-dependent signal transduction.

6. A method according to claim 5, wherein said human c-IAP binding target comprises a TRAF or an intracellular fragment of a TRAF sufficient to provide for c-IAP-specific binding.

7. A method of modulating apoptosis regulation in a cell comprising introducing into said cell a nucleic acid according to claim 1 whereby said nucleic acid is expressed in said cell and the resultant gene product modulates apoptosis regulation in said cell.

8. A method of modulating apoptosis regulation in a cell comprising introducing into said cell a nucleic acid according to claim 3 whereby said nucleic acid is expressed in said cell and the resultant gene product modulates apoptosis regulation in said cell.

9. A method according to claim 8 wherein said cell expresses a recombinant protein in in vitro culture and said gene product inhibits apoptosis in said cell, whereby the yield of said recombinant protein is increased.